

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and to provide information concerning the British Churches in wartime, as well as their contribution to post-war reconstruction.

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THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH DELEGATION

The visit of the Russian Churchmen is proving of great interest and pleasure to all concerned. The chief events have been fully recorded in the Press, so it is not necessary to list them here.

In accordance with our custom of printing important documents, we are publishing the full text of a letter brought by the Russians to the Archbishop of Canterbury from the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Alexei, and a speech by Mr. R. A. Butler at a Government Reception to the Delegation.

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA.

May 27th, 1945.

YOUR GRACE, OUR BELOVED BROTHER IN CHRIST,

The Russian Orthodox Church and I personally greet you through our representatives—Metropolitan Nikolai Krutitsky and the members of our clergy accompanying him—and once again express to you our best wishes on the occasion of your election and accedence to the highest office. In your person we also greet the Church of England and invoke the blessing of God upon the great British people.

We are carrying on our present joyful communion at a time when all freedom-loving peoples are celebrating victory over the evil forces of German Fascism, a victory achieved by the common efforts of our Army and the Armies of our gallant Allies.

The common struggle waged by our peoples against Fascism is not only a battle for the salvation of freedom, for learning, for culture, for the peace of Europe and of the whole world: it assumes a sacred significance as the defence of Christian principles from the barbaric foes of our Christian civilization.

And we believe that the sacrifice made by our peoples in this cruel struggle shall not

be in vain and that the longed-for peace shall now descend upon the whole world.

We believe together with you that through the cross of unheard of trials the resurrection of peoples will shine again, the resurrection of those principles of truth, peace and love which were trampled upon by Fascism and which were bequeathed to mankind by Him who is the ever living incarnation of love, peace and truth—by our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the light of these common hopes of ours especially valuable and fruitful is our communion in the spirit of Christian love and our mutual spiritual aid.

It was not long ago that the Russian Orthodox Church endured a grievous ordeal in losing its wise pilot—the Holy Patriarch Sergei. Yet even in this ordeal it finds solace in the knowledge that the brotherly Anglican Church sympathized in its grief.

The cordial words spoken by the late Archbishop of Canterbury at a funeral service, held in memory of Patriarch Sergei, at St. Margaret's Church in Westminster on May 23rd of last year, which described the personality of our Pontiff with such warmth and so accurately, comforted us greatly and represented yet another affirmation of the deep and unbreakable bonds uniting us.

It is with great sympathy that I repeat the words spoken on that occasion: "The friendship of our Churches is true and deep."

May this friendship be strengthened again and again by a true and direct communion and may the blessing of our Almighty God and Saviour rest on Your Grace, on the Church entrusted to you by God and on the noble, friendly people of your great country.

Please accept, Your Grace, the assurance of our brotherly love and deep respect.

ALEXEI,

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

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BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S WELCOME

The Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, Minister of Labour and National Service, presided at a luncheon given by the Government in London, on June 19th, 1945, in honour of the Russian Orthodox Church Delegation.

The following is the text of his speech of welcome to the Delegation:—

"I have very great pleasure on behalf of His Majesty's Government, in welcoming our distinguished visitors here to-day. We are in particular glad to welcome His Beatitude the Metropolitan Nikolai Krutitsky, whose courage and patience have become well known to us during the course of the barbarous German invasion of the territory of his country.

"We are also glad to welcome the Very Rev. Arch-Priest Nikolai Kolchitsky, the Rev. Juvenaliv Lunin.

"His Majesty's Government attach the greatest importance to close contact between Great Britain and Soviet Russia, especially between those of us who have the same interests.

"We have with us to-day not only His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, but also His Grace the Archbishop of York. The British public took the greatest interest in the visit of the Archbishop of York to Soviet Russia and he may have been described as 'a best seller,' or should I say 'a best speaker,' on his return.

"We are, therefore, all the more glad to welcome our distinguished visitors to-day. We have read in this country with interest and admiration of the way in which the Russian Church identified itself with the struggles and sorrows of the people, and of their great collections, which contributed materially to the necessary supplies of tanks and other war equipment for the heroic Russian Armies.

"We, too, in this country have been fortunate in that the Churches of all denominations have identified themselves with the nation in its great effort to stop aggression and to uphold liberty and moral values. Thousands of our clergy have been working as Chaplains in the front line. Others have been in the worst of the blitz helping in A.R.P. work and bringing comfort and encouragement to the people in the shelters. The Churches have been working with greatly depleted staffs during the war. Hundreds of our Church buildings, including some of our most treasured Churches, have been destroyed and there will be a great task of reconstruction before the British Churches after the war.

"The British people are very anxious to

make a worthy contribution to the restoration of Christian institutions in Europe. The collections at Victory Thanksgiving services were given to the cause of Christian reconstruction in Europe. No figures have yet been announced, but it is known that collections reached more than £30,000 (\$120,000).

"In our national life it is a truism to say that we owe much of what we cherish most to the inspiration of our Christian Church. I have had experience of this in the realm of education and I realize that the Church were in the field long before the Government ever stepped in with a paltry donation in 1832.

"The Church has also been a pioneer in the realm of social reform, and we depend upon them to-day as volunteer agencies to assist all the efforts of the State and Local Authorities in furthering the best interests of the people.

"I conclude by expressing very best wishes of His Majesty's Government for the future of the Russian Church and nation, and I should like to take this opportunity of greeting the new Patriarch Alexei, who has become Patriarch at such a critical time in the history of your nation."

ARMY PADRE REOPENS RANGOON CHURCHES

A Military Observer writes:

"A few days after the liberation of Rangoon, ten Anglican Churches were reopened and services held for the first time in more than three years.

"Ten Army padres, led by a Derbyshire minister, the Rev. S. T. Lewis, of Christ Church, Chesterfield, were responsible.

"Under Japanese occupation all Anglican services were forbidden, although some clandestine ones were held in private houses.

"When the Rev. S. T. Lewis and his padres arrived in the liberated city they found many of the Anglican churches wrecked and burnt out. Ten were structurally intact, although altars, pews, books and organs were missing.

"The churches had been used by the Japanese as ordnance stores, repair shops and quarters for their 'comfort girls.'

"Rangoon's Anglican Cathedral was a 'saki' distillery. Its west end was bricked off from the nave; two large vats were surrounded by rotting rice. Cow stalls had been built on the site of the high altar.

"As Rev. Lewis and his padres walked through the streets of Rangoon wearing the flash 'chaplain' on their jungle green battle-dresses, local Christians stopped them and

asked where church services were being held.

"These Army padres have been working overtime, conducting services for civilians as well as for troops. A normal Sunday's work is four services conducted before the evening curfew sends civilians to their homes.

"Reopened churches include the Scots Kirk, St. Gabriel's, Holy Cross Church and American Methodist Mission."

CHURCH LIFE IN GERMANY REVIVING

A Military Observer writes:

"Church life in that part of Germany which is under British occupation is already showing signs of returning vitality.

"Corpus Christi, with its traditional processions, was observed in many towns and villages in Westphalia. In some places it was the first public celebration of the feast for eight years. Altars were placed in the street, shrines were decorated with shrubbery, and red and white flags fluttered from poles and windows.

"At Osnabrück, Bielefeld, Saebeck (near Ibbenburen), Metelen (Burgstenfurt) and Twistringen (on the main road from Diepholz to Bremen), Corpus Christi was observed in this way, and the people, particularly the children, seemed to enjoy this opportunity of holding a festival.

"At Metelen the local priest asked the Y.M.C.A. canteen official if he could have permission to hold the procession, and was delighted when he learned that there was no objection.

"The Rev. G. R. Gilchrist, of Ranfurly Parish Church, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire, who is in charge of the Church of Scotland mobile canteen, attached to Third British Infantry Division, referring to this development, said: 'There is no doubt that the Churches will be focal centres of German life. The Church is the one organization which remains alive and in possession not only of its buildings but of its officers, though I understand there is a great shortage of clergy owing to the fact that so few have been going to the colleges.'"

AN AMERICAN SALUTE TO B.O.R.

Dr. George Stewart, the well-known American preacher, lecturer and writer, has just concluded an extended tour among British Forces in the Middle East and other theatres, lecturing on Anglo-American relationships.

He has sent us the following generous "Salute to British Other Ranks." What modesty might feel compelled to reject, friendly appreciation inclines us to print, with an assurance to our American friends that our heads are not easily turned.

"It has been given me to know you in some twenty-two countries throughout the world in the present conflict. You can take blame without complaint. It is hard for you to receive praise. But before departure may a stranger among you say a word which is in his heart.

"For years in desolate outposts, won at fearful cost, you have maintained and guarded lines of communication, enduring heat, tedium, hazard, loneliness and separation from home, with a patience which has been unequalled.

"You have campaigned in jungles not only with a formidable enemy, but with foes as lethal—malaria, dysentery, vermin, monsoons, trackless forests, mountains and cruel streams.

"You have companied with death and disease, with the terror by night and the arrow that flieth by day, nor lost that grim ironic humour which has fortified your own soul and steadied your friends.

"You have brothered strange tribes of many colours, learned their speech, taught them health, how to soldier and to work, to honour the King and to do their just share to rid the world of an evil thing.

"You have laboured and fought in alien lands, surrounded by every type of confusion and temptation and have kept your head.

"You have borne overseas service longer than the soldier of any other army. Through years when the face and form of wife and child or sweetheart were hard to keep before the eye of memory, when letters were difficult to write because all that could be said had so often been written, you remained steadfast.

"You have known disaster, have lost with honour, your faith undimmed in eventual victory.

"You have known staggering success without the lifting of an eyebrow.

"You will be the despair of those who too easily plan a new heaven and a new earth, for you will keep what the world sometimes calls stolidity, but which is an inner core of healthy scepticism and sanity.

"You profess little knowledge of history, but your roots go deep into a land which, for a millennium, has blessed the earth by her slow and steady march toward freedom and light. You are radical in speech, but slow

to give up tested ways. Those in great haste will despair of you.

"You will also disappoint the fears of many who have heard you in all your dialects, criticize the standing order with a fierce zeal for justice and reform. You will strive for a larger life, but you will not wreck the good to achieve a theoretical better. Your humour, your scepticism and your patience will save you from the nostrum of the quack.

"In great cathedrals, in shabby chapels, in field services in the open, in palm-leaf shacks, with your body steaming in the heat, in churches of your own building, I have seen you, shy of speaking of your faith, wash your spirit clean in old hymns and ancestral prayers, renewing the springs of inner life. You and your Sovereign are still Defenders of the Faith.

"The women of your land have shared your uniform, your perils and your work. They have never failed in a dangerous moment, nor have they missed their portion of the soldiers' noiseless pain in long years of waiting.

"To you, Tommy Atkins, my hat is off in a sincere salute. You have what it takes. You are a stout fellow."

WOMEN'S WORK FOR THE CHURCH

Far-reaching proposals—including the foundation of a new Central College—for the development of women's work for the Church of England, are put forward in "Training for Service: Being the Report of a Committee Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1944 on the Training of Women for Work in the Church," published recently by the Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 2, Great Peter Street, Westminster, S.W.1, price two shillings. The Report will be presented to the Summer Session of the Church Assembly next week.

The Report recommends that "a determined effort should be made to recruit university graduates and women holding responsible posts in National Service for full-time posts under the auspices of the Church. Methods of selection and testing should come into line with those which are to be required of men seeking ordination (i.e. selection boards and provisional acceptance by a bishop)."

A New Central College

In view of the limited financial resources, it is recommended that training houses should not reopen after the war or new

houses be opened without the approval of a committee appointed or recognized by the Archbishop and Bishops for the purpose; and that a new central theological college for women, providing a course of a new type for women of good general education, should be set up and that there should be a "coalescence of centres of specialized training in a federation of colleges adjacent to the new Central College." In this connection it is suggested that the Archbishop should, at an early date, call a round-table conference of those concerned with training of specialists in order to co-ordinate and unify their schemes.

In addition to the Central College it is urged that the Church should set up a well-endowed Refresher College in the country for men and women with a view to the better training of voluntary workers. Other training establishments contemplated include "one training house for deaconesses chosen and directed by the Council for the Order."

Among the general principles advocated, it is urged that the segregation of missionary trainees is not desirable; that Moral Welfare workers should have extended training and more study of Christian doctrine; that those training for Youth work should have a general training to enable them to transfer to other work in later years; and that, broadly, "in the training of Christian workers the Christian faith and philosophy of life should not be allowed to be subsidiary to vocational training. Theology should be studied for its own sake." The Report discusses at some length the teaching of theology in relation to practical work and life. It includes an outline of a two-year course of study, for use in the new Central College, which breaks new ground and is an important contribution to the subject.

It is urged that the Church should co-operate in the training schemes of voluntary youth organizations and help them with the religious side of training; and that a committee should consider the provision of a special course of training for those who have been in National Service. The training given by the Church Army and Ranyard Mission to women with less educational background should be continued and encouraged, assuming that certain improvements in training are carried out.

SPIRITUAL ISSUES—FINAL NUMBER

Next week's issue—No. 294 for June 28th, 1945—will be the final number of this publication.